

Derby Day Equine Fair brings out horse lovers

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ROCHESTER — Kasey Lillian has been riding horses for as long as she can remember. At 12, she considers herself an enthusiast.

So on Saturday when her mother took her to the Kentucky Derby Day Equine Fair at the Myhre Equine Complex, the young rider was filled with excitement.

"I can't believe there's so many horses here," she said.

Adding to the fun, were a number of vendors and activities scheduled throughout the entire day and leading up to the Kentucky Derby Party that evening.

Stephanie Lavertu spent time showing people how to properly groom a horse and showing her product line, Espana.

Part of the importance of grooming a horse, she said, is the connection made with the animal.

"When we're in the barn and it's quiet, he is so content," she said of her horse Patriot, or "Riot" for short.

"He's a beautiful horse," Larina McEntire said.

McEntire said she just start-



Ryan McBride/Staff Photographer

MULES, COURTESY OF PINE HILL MULES, bring people around in a wagon ride Saturday at the Equine Fair in Rochester.

ed learning how to ride horses and that she wishes she'd done it a long time ago.

"I was always afraid of heights, so I was nervous about getting up that high and having the horse be unpredictable," she said.

So far, though, she said her new love of horses is greater than her old fear of heights.

"I just love it. I wish I could have my own," she said.

The annual fair benefits the High Knoll therapeutic riding program and the Dover High School equine program

through the Career Technical Center. Students from the equine program in Dover spend time at the center doing hands-on learning.

Admission to the event itself was free and that's one of the things some suspected drew a steady crowd.

"It's a gorgeous day, we've never been up here before, and it's free," Katy Nylan said. Accompanied by her husband and four children, she said it was one of the rare things they've found to do as a whole



Ryan McBride/Staff Photographer

ANNE BROWN and her three year old son Alex pet with a hound named Gatsby at the Equine Fair Saturday afternoon in Rochester.

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family without spending a lot of money.

"They are loving the animals," she said of her children.

A petting zoo, traditional fair fare, and greeting fox hounds in the field at High

Knoll appeared to be the favorite attractions for younger visitors, other than the horses themselves.

For some, the fair was a close second to childhood dreams of actually owning a horse.

"I have a dog like those hounds, but I'd really love a horse," Samantha Gregoire, 7, said. "This is fun, too, though."